

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 17274

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV HAS INFLUENZA

1. BREZHNEV'S FAILURE TO MEET SENATOR MONDALE AS PROMISED REINFORCES STORIES OF ILLNESS BEING SPREAD BY SOVIET OFFICIALS. V.P. RUBEN, CHAIRMAN OF LEGISLATIVE LOWER HOUSE, TOLD AMBASSADOR STOESSEL TODAY AT AMBASSADOR'S LUNCH FOR MONDALE THAT BREZHNEV HAS THE GRIPPE, SOVIET TERM FOR INFLUENZA, AND NEEDS TO REST FOR VLADIVOSTOK MEETING. SENATOR MONDALE IS NOT BEING SNUBBED BY THE SOVIETS, WHO ON SHORT NOTICE GAVE HIM THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS WITH KOSYGIN TODAY AND PROMISED MEETING WITH PODGORNYY TOMORROW AS SUBSTITUTES FOR THE BREZHNEV MEETING. SOVIETS HAVE PROMISED A MEETING WITH GROMYKO ALSO.

2. BREZHNEV HAS NOT SEEN MRS. BANDARANAIKE OF SRI LANKA WHOSE VISIT ENDS TODAY ALTHOUGH SUCH MEETINGS ARE NOW COMMONPLACE AND EXPECTED ON THAT LEVEL.

3. THE CANCELLATION OF THE WORKERS MARCH PAST ON NOVEMBER 7 APPARENTLY WAS UNDERTAKEN TO LESSEN EXPOSURE OF THE POLITBURO LEADERS TO THE INCLEMENT WEATHER. IT NOW APPEARS THAT BREZHNEV WAS THE AILING ONE. AN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT NOTED ON NOVEMBER 6 THAT BREZHNEV WORE AN EARPHONE AND STUMBLED WHILE MOUNTING THE STAIRS.

4. BREZHNEV FACES A STIFF SCHEDULE IN NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND JANUARY WITH THE SHAH OF IRAN PROBABLY COMING NEXT WEEK,

THEN THE VLADIVOSTOK MEETING, A TWO-DAY VISIT TO ULAN BATOR,
AND A TRIP TO FRANCE.
STOESSEL

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